

NIGHT LIFE

JAMES HAWEKOTTE

IN INNUMERABLE Industries there is a night shift. A group of men whose day is the night; who live for weeks at a time and never see the sun. In a way this is a fascinating existence. I know, for I lived it all through the past summer.

Some people are shocked at the idea of sleeping through the day and then arising as everyone else goes to bed. I enjoyed starting to work at eleven o'clock. I had the streets to myself. There was no hurrying crowd, noisy traffic; Indianapolis was all mine; mine and a few others that lived as I did. To me the night was calm, soft and mysterious. The downtown streets were strangely quiet, lighted boulevards. Gradually the night grew more attractive to me than the day. I could feel like a king surveying his kingdom; rather than merely a part of a hurrying metropolis.

The hurrying and the bustling lives while most of us live and hate, so the night

was a release. No one hurries at night because there is no one to hurry. I could stop if I wanted to, go slowly if I wanted to and for the first time in five years I started to see some beauty in downtown Indianapolis. Washington street was a kaleidoscope of colors. The dome of the State House, instead of the daytime tarnished green, was almost fluorescent. It glowed dimly, reflecting the lights from some of the neon signs. A tavern changed into a gallery of colors as a night light shone through the bottles stacked in the window, painting shadows on the sidewalk. A parking lot changed into a little park. A scattering of lighted windows looked like stars that got a little too close to earth. The streetcar tracks were trickles of silver and the wires above them gold.

People may have their daytime jobs, I will take night work in preference anytime.

THE PARTING

RILEY SULLIVAN

I COULD Imagine him coming in quietly, scarcely taking the effort to close the door securely. Yet, he might come in hurriedly, slam the door, run through the house, throw his coat and books on the dining room table, and be up in our room almost before the echo of the noise had died away. He was moody and changeable; that was why I was leaving; that was what I disliked about him; and that was why I did not know how he would enter the house. In fact, I never knew how he was going to act under any condition. During his exhilarated moods, he was almost too kind

and generous to everyone: his friends, acquaintances, and animals alike. But some of his moods were unbearable. He seemed always above or below everything on earth. I don't believe he ever felt in conjunction with a living person or thing.

I definitely decided to move out and take a room elsewhere. I packed hurriedly and nervously, knowing well my decision would be a shock to him. I was determined; so I really did not care.

There was confusion downstairs. I heard the door slam, and he was up the stairs almost before I realized it. My back

was towards him; I pretended to be doing something. When he entered, he stood for a moment surveying the room, then said, "Hi buddy. Going someplace?"

"Yes," I said standing up erect, "I'm moving out."

"Don't like the roomers?"

"Don't like the room," I said.

I looked him in the face, and I could see he was hurt, but he soon covered this fact up by helping me with my packing. Had I not known him so well, he would have succeeded in making me believe he was even glad I was leaving. He closed my suitcases and carried them downstairs

and out to the car. I followed him with a couple of coats over my arm. When we had put them in the car, I turned to him and said, "Well, so long; I'll be seein' you."

"Yes," he said, "good bye; I'll see you around." He shot me an askance look, turned, and went up the walk towards the front porch.

I stepped on the starter; the motor roared momentarily. As it idled down, I could hear a dog's painful howl. Even after I had driven a block, I could still hear the howling as the dog retreated towards the back yard. I knew someone had kicked him.

POEM

ARDATH WEIGLER

I Ivy and jew growing in pink and blue
mugs
Mugs meant for small children
Mugs settled primly on lace doilies
Atop a spinster desk

TWO MONTHS LATER

II He was standing there under the neon
sign—tall, hair rough in the wind—
broken outline of glasses and upturned
collar

Dull tap of narrow black heels on
the asphalt.

He turned as they walked toward
him, to him, past him.

Her heart did a flat-footed ballet
as she thought, "This is the end, fool."
—tugging, choking, adolescent heaviness
crushing her breath with its
vacuum.

He thought, "She's putting on a
little weight," and lighted a cigarette.

III Experience

Is like a candle . . .
Burning path traced
In beauty or dormant pain
For the moment
And then is gone
Behind it—a smoked and streaked
stain . . .

IV Gray
Thin—splintered and stifling
With iron etching of trees and stone
In bitter relief against the vague
Blankness of a flat day—
Lop-sided spiral of factory smoke
Slowly unwinds itself
From soot-crusting chimney—
Gray arcs of steel colored starlings
Wheeling with scissor-like precision
Toward a gray future.
Inside, dry warmth of the silver-pale
radiator
Brings forth odor of old wine
From empty bottles on the dirty
Window sill